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ABSTRACT

A practicum was developed to increase the number and success rate of junior Honors English students--63 students who were 62% Latino and 38% African-American--taking the English Advanced Placement (AP) examinations. Test strategies that were designed to allay students' innate fears about tests in general and specifically about English language and literature placement tests were taught. Also taught was style analysis of language and literature. As motivation for test success, academic pep rallies were held in the classroom in the same manner as athletic pep rallies. Other key elements that contributed to student success were the daily collaborative learning groups and motivational guest speakers in the classroom. Outcomes were positive. Not only did the number of juniors taking an exam increase, but the students also demonstrated more confidence in themselves as English students and test takers. Teachers involved in this practicum found that early intervention and the empowerment of students with skills and strategies germane to AP exams were critical for their success. An epiphany was realized by many students in the target group before the practicum's end. Much to their surprise, they found that they enjoyed reading, analyzing, and writing about literature. (Includes two tables of data; contains 26 references. Appendix A consists of a 21-item questionnaire for juniors and seniors; Appendix B consists of a literary style analysis pre/posttest). (NKA)

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ED 376 496

Increasing the Number and Success Rate of Junior Honors English Students in Taking English Advanced Placement Examinations

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Cluster 55

A Practicum I Report Presented to the
Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies in
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

Nova Southeastern University

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PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

This practicum took place as described.

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July 13, 1994

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This practicum report was submitted by Alice Shipman-Campbell under the direction of the adviser listed below. It was submitted to the Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova Southeastern University.

Approved:

Aug. 9, 1994

Date of Final Approval of Report

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William W. Anderson, Ed.D., Adviser

Acknowledgments

Giving honor to the Holy Creator who strengthens and motivates me on a daily basis, to my family (you too Daddy, Manda, and Momma) whose love, sacrifice, and understanding has sustained me for the past two years while in this doctoral program; to my special friends who took the time to correct my errors, pick me up when I was down, and insist that I persist; to my friend and colleague whose expert word-processing skills and intelligence make me look and sound like an "expert" in this practicum; to my caring, patient, astute practicum adviser who guided me to "be attentive to important detail and adherent to prescribed conventions..." so that my work would "make a meaningful, enduring difference in the lives of youth"; to my friend and colleague who suggested that I relax and "let my hair down" and who also believed in my vision while encouraging and preparing her own senior students for the AP exam; and finally to the students who took part in this teaching/learning experience and whose dedication and sincere willingness to learn challenged the writer to give the best and most that a teacher can give; I give all of you mentioned here hugs, kisses, and heart-felt thank yous for giving me your best. I love and respect you all more than I did yesterday but less than I will tomorrow.

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ABSTRACT

Increasing the Number and Success Rate of Junior Honors English Students in Taking English Advanced Placement Examinations. Shipman-Campbell, Alice, 1994: Practicum Report, Nova Southeastern University, Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies. African American Test Taking/ Advanced Placement Examinations/Latino, Chicano Test Taking/Test Coaching/Multicultural Literature/Test Anxiety/Style Analysis/African American, Latino American High School Testing/Self Esteem/Collaborative Cooperative learning groups/Secondary Gifted Programs

The goal of this practicum was to increase the number and success rate of junior Honors English students in taking the English Advanced Placement examinations. Their confidence in themselves as English students and as test takers was enhanced as a result of the test preparation offered in this practicum implementation.

During the three month practicum period, two major areas were targeted to assist high school students in preparation for the English Advanced Placement examinations. Test strategies that were designed to allay students' innate fears about tests in general but specifically the English Language and Literature Advanced Placement examinations were intensely taught. Style analysis of literature and language was another major area taught to assist students in preparation for the Advanced Placement (AP) examinations. As motivation for test success, academic pep rallies were held in the classroom in the same manner as athletic pep rallies. Other key elements that contributed to students' success were the daily collaborative learning groups and the motivational guest speakers that took place in the classroom.

The outcomes of the practicum were positive. Not only did the number of juniors taking an exam increase, the students demonstrated more confidence in themselves as English students and test takers. The teachers involved in this practicum found that early intervention and empowering students with skills and strategies germane to AP exams was critical for their success. A major epiphany was realized by many students in this target group before the end of this practicum. They enjoyed reading, analyzing and writing about literature much to their surprise.

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July 13, 1994 Alice Shipman Campbell

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Description of Work Setting and Community

The writer is employed by a small (thirteen schools) district located near one of the largest metropolitan cities and one of the top five school districts in the country. The community has had an upsurge in population within the first seven years that has impacted the schools tremendously. As a result of this upsurge, the majority of this district's schools have adopted the multiple track system. The writer's work setting in inclusive of a non-traditional school year calendar called "Year Round" school. Three years ago the State Department of Education mandated the school district to adopt such a calendar as a means of ameliorating the excessively over-crowded student population. Three "tracks" have been operative since that time which means the student population is divided into thirds.

The families in the community are primarily lower socio-economic workers earning an average of less than $15,000.00 per year. Because of the low income level of the parents, many of the students in the target group work part or full time to help increase their family's income. The average adult education level is less than ninth grade. The community is largely comprised of Spanish-dominant speakers.

Writer's Work Setting and Role

The work setting for the writer is at the lone high school in this district. The writer has been employed at this school site for twenty-one years as a teacher in the English Department. Although the writer's primary responsibilities have been in the classroom, the challenges of being Department Chairperson, Mentor teacher, Gifted and Talented Coordinator, union representative as well as teacher-sponsor of three clubs and

ten classes over the past twenty years have added to this writer's professional and personal depth. Having completed a Master of Arts degree in education several years ago, the writer is currently pursuing a doctorate degree in the same subject with a specialization in School Management and Instructional Leadership.

The writer's role in this problem solving activity will be to identify and implement strategies needed by the writer's Honors English juniors who will need specific skills before they take an AP English examination.

Students currently enrolled in this writer's eleventh grade Pre-Advanced Placement Honors English class will be the target group in this practicum. This group of juniors consists of sixty students who have been recommended by their former English teachers, counselors, or parents for the English Honors program. It should also be noted that nineteen of the sixty students have been identified as Gifted and Talented according to the Structure of the Intellect test. In few cases the students themselves requested placement in the Honors classes based on their previous academic commitment or their willingness to accept the rigor of an accelerated language arts program.

The target group's racial composition is thirty-eight percent African-American and sixty-two percent Latino-American. Females out-number the male students with thirty-eight total to the male's total of twenty-five. Of the sixty-three total students, fifty-one of them have taken two or more honors courses while in high school for two or more years. The average cumulative grade point average of this writer's honors students after completion of their junior year first semester is 3.2. (Based on a four point scale with A = 4, B = 3, etc.)

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

Juniors in the Honors English courses at this writer's work venue have not attempted to take the Advanced Placement English exams over the past three years. Although many of these same students as juniors the previous year took AP exams in other subject areas (i.e. Spanish, Calculus, History and Chemistry) they chose not to take any of the AP English exams.

A large portion of juniors in the Honors program have been enrolled in and passed college preparatory and honors academic programs in more than one subject area for two or more years. This speaks clearly to the presumption that these junior grade level students have the potential to be successful on an AP exam in English given appropriate learning activities and strategies for scoring high on the exam.

To add to this some of these juniors have been ranked according to their cumulative grade point average in the top ten of their junior class. The previous two classes of juniors in the Honors English classes, as a matter of fact, have included students who qualified and were accepted into universities that include Princeton, Harvard, Stanford, and University of California at Berkeley; Howard, Hampton, and Spelman.

Interestingly enough, these students prepared themselves for the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) but did not extend their preparation for the AP English exams.

This trend not only limited the level of academia that these juniors could have experienced, it also negated the opportunity for these juniors to receive college credit upon scoring a three or more on the test which would in turn have been a financial

compensation for the students since scoring three plus on the exam obviously translates into fewer dollars and cents needed to spend on college courses. Thus, this writer believes the junior honors English student should take an AP English Examination to allow them the challenge of high level curricula while offering the opportunity to them and their parents to save hundreds of dollars.

Problem Documentation

Actual evidence exists that supports the existence of the problem at the writer's work site.

Statistics gathered from the on site Advanced Placement (AP) Coordinator which were compiled by the College Board AP Program confirms the fact that no juniors took the AP English exams at this site for the past three years.

In a short questionnaire administered to the current seniors in AP English or Senior Honors English classes, they all indicated that they did not take an AP English exam as an honors junior student the previous year.

In a questionnaire responded to by the current junior honors English (Pre-AP) students, they indicated that their intentions do not include taking an AP English exam this year. Out of the sixty junior respondents to the questionnaire, fifty-five said they do not plan to take an AP English exam.

Causative Analysis

A plethora of causes have been noted by this writer as to why the exams are not taken by juniors. After evaluating the results of the questionnaire administered to the honors juniors, it was determined that the disinterest in the AP English exams has five main causes.

Students expressed a low self-confidence level in being able to succeed on tests such as the AP English exams. On the questionnaire, fifty-one of the sixty juniors indicated that they are currently acquiring a clear idea and knowledge about style analysis techniques that they have been informed by the writer will be employed on the exams. Literary techniques such as an author's tone, attitude, imagery, point of view, syntax and diction are some of the style analysis terminology and techniques that will be taught to the juniors as a means of bolstering their self-confidence in taking the test. Juniors responding to the questionnaire also expressed their limited test-wiseness skills. However, forty-nine of the sixty juniors questioned believe they are currently receiving valuable information and test-taking skills necessary for their success on the exams.

An overwhelming fifty-eight of sixty juniors surveyed expressed their ignorance regarding the availability of receiving college credit for scoring a three or more on the exams, which translates into a savings of hundreds of dollars in college tuition fees. This information appeared to be of great interest to the target group. Since the average income of the parents in the community is below $15,000 per year it stands to reason that a substantial monetary savings to their parents will be of considerable interest to the juniors.

Senior students surveyed agreed that the American literature selected in their junior honors course lacked characters and situations in life that were similar to their own character and situations. This undoubtedly impacted their decision to ignore the test during their junior year although of course, this was only one of several factors that steered them from taking the test. Forty-six of seventy-three seniors "strongly disagreed" that the literature presented had characters and situations in life similar to their own. The obvious inference in their majority response clearly relates to the core American literature not being culturally inclusive of their own.

The current juniors, however, "strongly agreed" that the American literature presented thus far has characters and situations in life that are similar to their own. Fifty-four out of sixty juniors responded in this manner.

In summary, low student self-confidence, limited knowledge about style analysis of literature; little or no test-taking skills; ignorance regarding college credit and tuition reduction; and cultural exclusion from the core American literature presented in the Pre-AP English course are significant causes junior honor students do not take the AP English examinations.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

Other professionals have written about the existence of African American and Latino American students either rejecting the idea of taking rigorous academic courses and examinations such as the AP test or being rejected by decision-making adults when the opportunity presents itself for the inclusion of students from the two groups in question.

Gregory (1990) and George (1992) state that surprisingly, parents and their children were remiss in identifying potential giftedness or academic acceleration in their own children as were many educators that neglected to include more variety in the identification of gifted students whose culture is not from the mainstream culture (Hale-Benson 1982). One major reason why these students are not included by the decision makers in either the testing or selection process for accelerated courses or programs such as the gifted or advanced placement programs is rooted in the presumption that African American and Latino American students who because of their victimization within a society that promotes and embraces a system of privilege and oppression, believe these

students do not qualify or belong in gifted and/or advanced placement academic programs (Hilliard 1989). Hilliard posits that this inequity in the educational system is merely an extension of a much greater and complex problem that exists throughout the major systems in society. The real powers, corporate ownership and top level government powers he says, are not yet "integrated". Hilliard further postulates that when schools accept the reality as a widespread belief that students from non-European cultures can and should be included in top academic programs then some inroads to equity in the classrooms may become evident.

It must not be a nebulous idea to the decision makers in schools that non-European students, particularly African American and Latino American, must be taught personal and cultural knowledge as well as school knowledge in order for these students to accept the idea that they, too, must be included in academic programs (Banks 1993). He defines personal/cultural knowledge as the concepts, explanations, and interpretations that students derive from personal experiences in their homes, families, and community cultures. School knowledge he conceptualizes as the facts, concepts, generalizations, and interpretations that are presented in textbooks, teacher's guides, other media forms, and lectures by teachers.

Research and theory by Fordham and Ogbu (1986) indicate that low socio-economic African American students experience many academic hardships in the school system because of their cultural knowledge conflicting with the school knowledge and expectations that are promoted in textbooks, films, and by teachers. Fordham and Ogbu believe that the culture of many low income African American students in particular is oppositional to the school culture. Because of this diabolical conflict of "cultures", the students believe that if they are successful in learning the knowledge taught in schools, they will violate their unspoken affinity and connectedness to their own people and culture. Thus, the students believe they run the risk of "acting white". Fordham (1991)

suggests the African American students who in fact become high academic achievers resolve this conflict between personal cultural knowledge and school knowledge by becoming "raceless".

Kunjufu (1988) emphatically disagrees with Fordham's suggestion and affirms that while it is true that many students, particularly African American, are not motivated to take rigorous courses and tests such as the AP English test because of their fear of being labeled as "acting white", he does support the opposing belief that students must be taught to uphold their culture and heritage without the fallacious idea that having pride in one's culture and heritage translates into the denigrating idea that academic success is impossible without suicidally dismissing one's personal cultural knowledge. Thus students should be taught at home and strongly reinforced at school that challenging courses and tests like the AP English exams should be taken by them.

Because school knowledge is more consistent with the cultural experiences of most white middle class students than most low income African American and Latino American students, the latter students have generally found the school a more uncomfortable place than their white middle income counter parts. The African American and Latino American students often find the school culture alienating and remiss of their cultural experiences, hopes, dreams, and struggles (Hale-Benson 1982, Heath 1983; Ramirez and Castaneda 1974).

In addition to the students' personal/cultural knowledge being disregarded by schools, their learning styles are generally ignored too which may cause them to feel less confident. Research on learning styles of gifted students from the non-European cultural groups shows that these students have preferences to learn in uniquely different ways (Ewing and Yong 1992). They found that African American and Latino American gifted students (such as those that enroll in AP and Honors courses) prefer different learning styles and environmental factors that affect their motivation and achievement in class and

on tests. Their research revealed the three variables that most characterized gifted African American students were preference to study in the afternoon, responsibility, and motivation. Latino American gifted students were most characterized by preference for kinesthetic modality, motivation and responsibility. It was also revealed that gifted African American students did not prefer auditory modality, structure, and noise (i.e. preferred a quiet environment). Gifted Latino American students did not prefer warm classroom temperatures, structure, and auditory modality. These revelations show that in general, gifted African American students tend to prefer a quiet and cool environment and less structure as well as kinesthetic visual modes of learning (Cody 1983; Yong & McIntyre 1992). The seating arrangement informally structured was also found to be important to Latino and African American students. Tappenden (1983) found that African American students preferred to study in the afternoon, visual modality, and were responsible. In similar research, it was found that a preference for a loosely structured learning environment was preferred (Hale-Benson 1982; Jalali 1989; Williams 1990).

Gifted Latino American students' non-preference for auditory modality tends to indicate that they grasp ideas easily and often understand the essence of what is being said sometimes before they hear the full statements. Also some teachers talk too slowly and often provide repetitions and redundancies that these students do not necessarily need (Dunn & Price 1980). Competitive forms of learning in general violate the personal/ cultural learning styles of gifted and academically accelerated students from the Latino and African American community (Kunjufu 1980, Hale-Benson 1982, Elbow & Belanoff 1989).

According to Harter (1990), adolescents in general value what their peers think about them to a greater extent than what is academically correct or acceptable to parents, teachers, or college boards. Their self-identify and esteem are largely based on their perceptions of what their peer group thinks about them as opposed to what they think

about themselves. Even more important to adolescents she found is the strong influence classmates have on each other as opposed to their close friends who may not be part of the same class. Harter suggests that when school administrators or teachers and parents do not share the same values, such as the value and importance of studying hard and taking challenging academic courses like the Advanced Placement exam, then the student's self-esteem may diminish. Her research also reveals that there is a much greater connection between school grades and self-esteem among white students than among African American students. This suggests several things. One is that most white students have enjoyed the benefits of an educational system that grants them privileges and greater success (including grades and high expectations of them by the administrators and teachers). This privilege that Hilliard argues is afforded to white students engenders high self-esteem and a positive personal identify. Conversely, this built-in system of privilege more often than not lowers the non-European students' esteem and personal identify which undoubtedly can affect the African American and Latino American's desire to involve themselves in Advanced Placement test programs. As a response to the "privilege" educational system, the Latino and African American students tend to gravitate or create situations where they are valued. Co-curricular and other activities in which they feel they excel and over which they have control, become of primary importance to these students (Hilliard). For example, athletic prowess, musical talent, acting ability, sexuality, and certain antisocial behaviors may become more highly valued than academic performance (Harter) to the African American and Latino American student.

Poor or no preparation for achievement and aptitude tests is cited as another cause for African American and Latino American students ignoring opportunities to take the AP English exams. Up until the past decade, it was an established belief that preparing or coaching students for aptitude or achievement tests such as the AP exams was futile since it was a common belief that aptitude tests were said to measure broad cognitive abilities

developed over long periods of time in school and non-school settings; achievement tests measured specific skills and content taught in specific courses of study (Bangert-Drowns et. al, 1983). Empirical research on such issues has found that aptitude scores can be influenced by direct test preparation by a teacher or an academic coach. Bangert-Drowns, et. al. found that achievement test scores such as for AP exams can significantly be influenced by coaching programs also. They found, however, that although coaching boosts achievement scores, the effects of coaching for aptitude tests resulted in higher test gains for students than for achievement tests gains. The question of coaching program length and quality factor into the test gain pattern also.

Coaching programs for African American and Latino American students must be instituted only if these students are not isolated and segregated with stigmatizing labels placed on the programs and students such as "remedial" and "at risk" (Steele 1992). In his current research, he posits that there is a relationship between educational performance and feelings of racial vulnerability. His findings support the idea that performance of African American students ameliorates if the racial vulnerability they feel in school is reduced. He believes these students must be challenged academically while valuing them as people at the same time. The success that students are bound to enjoy by enrolling in and taking a coaching program that prepares students for an AP examination may be one of the challenges these students need to assure their self-esteem is not compromised. Gifford and Fluitt (1980), Rincon (1979), Powers & Alderman (1983), Linn (1983) emphatically believe also that test-coaching may be beneficial to students.

Test-wiseness strategies for style analysis explication were not offered to the junior Honors English students in preparation for the AP English exams last year. Style analysis techniques and terminology that may appear on the exam were not provided these students. Synthesis of literary terms such as diction, detail, point of view, organization,

and syntax are terms commonly used and expected to be applied by students taking the AP English exams (Schaffer 1991).

Finally, former students from the junior Honors English program did not have vital information about the AP English exam that may have served to persuade them to take the exam. Major benefits of taking the Pre-AP junior Honors English course are numerous. One benefit that the students were not aware of according to this writer's student questionnaire (APPENDIX A) was the policy of participating colleges and universities awarding college credit, advanced placement, or both. In general, an AP grade of three or better indicates sufficient mastery of course content to allow exemption from a college course comparable to the AP course, placement in the succeeding college course, or credit (College Board 1993). This advanced placement translates into hundreds of dollars saved upon entrance into participating colleges and universities because fewer courses have to be taken.

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOME AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Goals and Expectations

The goal of this writer is to increase the number of junior Honors English students taking an Advanced Placement English examination. It is expected that their confidence in themselves as English students and as test takers will be enhanced as a result of their test preparation.

Expected Outcomes

Outcome One

Ten (10) out of sixty (60) Honors juniors will take an AP English examination.

Outcome Two

Three (3) out of ten (10) will score a 3 or better on the exam.

Measurement of Outcomes

Outcome one will be evaluated by obtaining and reviewing the list of students' names from the writer's Honors English classes who took the AP English exam as reported by the College Entrance Examination Board and submitted to the writer's on-site test coordinator.

Outcome two will be evaluated by reviewing and evaluating all AP English exam scores received from the College Examination Board noting in particular scores of 3 or higher of students who are juniors in the writer's Honors English classes.

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Discussion and Evaluation of Solutions

Since the problem was that for the past three years at the writer's work site, the honors juniors did not feel confident about their test-taking and style analysis skills and therefore did not take an Advanced Placement (AP) examination in English Literature or Language, the solution to this problem required a change in the method used in the past by teachers to encourage the junior honor students to take the test. The literature suggested a myriad of solutions to the problem.

Gregory (1988) and George (1992) agree that parents and educators need to have access to varied instruments for identifying giftedness or academically accelerated students other than using only the standard Meeker Structure of the Intellect Aptitude test which is the only instrument used to test giftedness at the writer's site. Without the access and utilization of alternative testing procedures, many non-European students will not have an opportunity to partake in a gifted/honors program (George). Gregory, George, and Hale-Benson (1982) suggest using other instruments such as the Torrance "Test of Creative Thinking" and Program of Assessment, Diagnosis and Instruction (PADI). The type of tests used as suggested by the literature was the Meeker test (SOI). However, the problem at the writer's site was not the testing instrument. The greatest problem that plagued the junior honors students was their parents and teachers not recognizing their accelerated, or gifted ability. Thus, these students needed to be motivated by their parents, but more so by teachers into believing that they (students) could succeed in rigorous academic classes such as English Honors or AP classes. Using this literature as an impetus, the writer worked diligently to provide the junior honor students with highly impacting motivational lessons and activities to enhance their confidence and competence.

Kunjufu (1988) suggests promoting academic pep rallies as school-wide events where the academically successful students would be presented to the student body in a similar manner such as an athletic team. The academic students, in fact were honored, as the cheer leaders and band played creating a "champion/winners" atmosphere in the gymnasium. Another academic pep rally that was implemented by the writer was held in the classroom days prior to the AP exams. The classroom rally left students feeling excited and desirous of achieving maximum results according to responses placed anonymously in a suggestion box provided by the writer for student reactions/responses to the pep rally.

Ewing and Yong's research led them to reveal the idea that the wrong room environment (i.e., room temperature, learning centers, kinesthetic modality and auditory modality) affects the learning of non-European gifted students. Their research using African American, Latino American, and Chinese American control groups, differentiates the three groups' learning styles that could be determinant contributors to a student's success or failure in a class. The writer found that the African and Latino American students' success invigorated when more opportunities for kinesthetic modes such as using manipulative and other "hands on" methods were included in lesson plans as suggested by Ewing and Yong. The writer allowed non-traditional means for students to demonstrate their understanding and synthesis of conceptual test-related information such as an author's literary style. For example, some students brought in videos, audio tapes of their parents or peers as they spoke or read sentences that denoted differences in tone, while others cut out articles, fiction stories and editorials from a variety of sources that clearly demonstrated the author's point of view. Students had occasions to cut pictures from magazines that depicted scenes or concepts from the literature being studied in class. For example, students were encouraged to research the Enslavement period in United States history and make a collage of recorded pictures of Enslaved Africans whose backs had

been disfigured by incessant, vicious whippings by slave (African) owners. In Toni Morrison's Beloved, the main character Sethe, is described as having a back that resembled a "choke cherry tree" because of frequent whippings. These pictures exemplified the use of manipulatives in learning. While studying John Steinbeck's Grapes of Wrath, students were encouraged to research the Dust Bowl and the Great Migration West. Again, they could create a poem, story, editorial, or collage depicting the impoverished people known as the "Okies" as they described or pictured the vastness of bone-dry farm land. These are examples of kinesthetic and non-traditional ways students demonstrated their understanding.

Tappenden (1983) concurs with the literature of Dunn & Price (1980) who found that Latino and African American students progressed more in a loosely-structured room environment with visual stimulation on the walls. Cody, Young, and Tappenden also suggest the seating arrangement for both groups of students should be informally structured (i.e., circles, squares, triads). Following the suggestions in the literature, the writer re-arranged all of the students' desks (including the writer's desk) and placed them in the suggested formations. Since there was daily cooperative and collaborative work in the class, these suggested formulations aided the students in their work efforts. The teacher was placed in a position physically that stripped the focus away and placed it on the students. This at first made this writer feel less powerful initially. Mental and emotional adjustments had to be made by the writer. However, by the end of the first week of implementation, the writer recognized that it was not necessary to feel powerful over students. Instead, it was comforting to know that finally the students were taking more responsibility for who they were as students in the classroom. They worked as a unit of one that included the writer as a meaningful resource. This writer acted more like a coach as opposed to the traditional teacher who stands in the front of the class and lectures to students who may or may not deem it necessary to listen.

In fact, literature by Bangert-Drowns, Kirlik, and Kulik (1983) suggest that coaching students in preparation for aptitude and achievement tests has great benefits. Their research suggest that coaching programs help students test-taking skills and their self-confidence.

Peer support in this writer's classroom became of primary importance to the success of the AP test preparation/coaching program. The students established friendships and respect for each other more readily and visibly during implementation than the pre-implementation time period. During one particular classroom activity titled the "Flash Light Ceremony: Going From Darkness to Lightness" each student was required to bring to class a copy of her/his favorite piece of literature. A copy of the whole or excerpted piece of literature was reproduced for every class member. The students were instructed by the writer to orally analyze their piece of literature focusing on the elements to be tested on the AP exam. They also had to explain why they chose that particular piece of literature. The lights were dimmed in the classroom and all the students formed a circle symbolizing their connectedness and unity to each other. This sharing evoked a multiplicity of emotions from the students and this writer. Several students spoke about how the study of literature had become an enriching activity for them. Other students cried as they spoke about their self-growth and development that had occurred as a result of being able to work and learn so closely (cooperatively and collaboratively) with each other. The students all expressed that their self-esteem and confidence in themselves had heightened as a result of the writer's different approach to studying literature in a non-traditional atmosphere such as that which the writer had allowed to develop in the classroom as suggested by the literature. Kunjufu and Harter(1990) agree in their literature that peer and classmate influence is very critical during an adolescent's school years. Empowering students through test-wiseness programs, they have found engenders success in class and promotes a positive attitude about themselves and tests.

Finally, students enjoy greater success in schools when the curricula engages them through literature and other curricular choices reflective of the young adult experience from diverse cultural perspectives. This definitely includes their own culture curricula that is inclusive instead of exclusive and fosters pride and confidence in students while simultaneously promotes student success in school and ultimately in life (Hale-Benson, Kunjufu, Hilliard, Steele, Banks, Ramirez, and Castaneda). Following the suggestions and findings of these researchers, this writer included literature written by Latino and African American authors like Rudolfo Anaya, Sandra Cisneros, Toni Morrison, and Ralph Ellison as major contributors to the American Mosaic of American literature. The writer balanced their literature with that of Ralph Waldo Emerson, J. D. Salinger, and other traditionally-studied authors to demonstrate the validity, beauty, and contribution of American authors representing part of the diversity in these United States called America.

Description of Selected Solution

This writer employed many of the solutions discussed in the previous section. Encapsulated, the writer implemented the solution strategy that follows:

To enhance the students' confidence as test-takers and English students, the writer implemented activities in the classroom that were designed to boost the students' self-confidence and style analysis skills.

Students began implementation by viewing excerpts from the video "Stand and Deliver" which depicts the commitment of the students and teacher in preparing to pass an Advanced Placement (AP) exam.

Twice per month, an entire class, an entire class period was targeted for special activities that focused on ways to improve student's self-confidence. These activities include students choosing and wearing a particular statement that they felt reflected their feelings about themselves (i.e., "I am a beautiful, loving person"). Students shared with their cluster group why they chose a particular statement. As a weekly "ritual", the writer

wrote the positive "Thought for the Week" on the chalkboard and had three students orally respond to it. The writer scheduled weekly visits of guests to come in and speak to the students for ten minutes on : a) goal setting, b) feeling good about who you are, c) be all that you can be, d) and/or other motivating topics. These were not lectures, as cautioned by Dunn & Price (1980). Students also had the opportunity to suggest and choose a "Motivator for the Month" and write a paragraph expressing why their choice was made. Other awards were given during this monthly celebration for categories like "Most Improved" and "Most Caring". These monthly celebrations became academic "pep rallies" as suggested in the literature by Kunjufu et. al.

The room environment was also addressed during the implementation of the practicum as suggested in the literature. The students' desks, for example were placed in a circle. The regimented five row arrangement was eliminated also during the implementation period. Highly visible, colorful, motivating posters and charts adorned the walls as suggested in the literature. The writer made it a practice to include a small visual (picture, symbol, object or quote) on all hand-outs as revealed in the literature.

The writer allowed the students the option of making posters, collages, video tapes or any other manipulatives that assisted the students in synthesizing and internalizing the concepts that were necessary for them to master for success on the AP exam.

Three out of five weekly lesson plans centered around direct teaching (coaching) for the AP exam. (One lesson per week as previously stated focused on motivation and self-confidence enhancement.) Test-taking strategies that assisted the students with the AP exam were also taught by the writer. Style analysis terminology and techniques were emphasized through practice reading and writing (mock tests) assignments.

Recognizing that previous and current juniors in the Honors classes said they were not made aware that colleges would grant college credit to them if they scored a three or more on the test, this writer promoted the benefits of the test weekly by discussing with

students sample tests from previous years; announcing the test in the school bulletin; placing motivational words or phrases in the counselor's offices after permission was granted; and placed motivationals in select classrooms (with teacher's permission). A letter was drafted by the writer to announce to parent the benefits of their child taking an AP exam. This letter included a bottom tear-off section that was returned by the students to the writer after the parents signed the letter acknowledging the receipt of the letter and understanding about the exam. This letter included space at the bottom for the parent to write two words or a statement about their child that was shared in class as part of the on-going classroom motivation and confidence enhancement program.

The writer utilized the literary works of a variety of American authors as suggested by researchers in the literature. Literature was not limited to that written by male, European Americans. In addition to the traditional (canon) choices, literature that reflected the writer's student population was infused in the curricula in a non-marginal manner. To show cultural and perspective balance and to demonstrate to the students that their cultural experiences and situations in life have validity and richness, African and Latino American authors such as Sandra Cisneros, Rudolfo Anaya, Toni Morrison and Ralph Ellison were studied in depth.

A motivational pre-test pep rally was provided by the writer for students. They were treated to refreshments as a reward for their commitment to themselves and the test.

Finally after the exam, the writer administered the same questionnaire and quiz (Appendices A & B) to the students. A self-study was completed by the writer using the students' responses to the questionnaire and quiz.

Success of the practicum was claimed by the writer since nineteen out of sixty juniors took an AP Exam which exceeds the expected outcome of only ten juniors.

Further success was celebrated by the writer because eight of ten juniors scored a three or more on a "Mock" test administered in class and scored by two impartial colleagues. This meets the second outcome.

As a result of this successful practicum, the writer chaired an English Department meeting to share the results and discuss the implications of future curricular needs and assessments in the department. Also, a district gifted and talented meeting was held where the writer engaged teachers in the problem and solution presented in this practicum. As a result of this meeting, this writer will provide staff development meetings at the junior and senior high schools in the district to familiarize teachers with the breadth, depth, and implications of this practicum and the students who were impacted.

Report of Action Taken

A summary of the actions taken in implementing the plans and strategies designed to accomplish the goals and objectives of the practicum was as follows:

Week 1

This week was spent organizing and laying the foundation for the practicum implementation. Several non-teaching activities had to be accomplished this week before actual direct teaching (coaching) could begin. The first thing this writer did every Monday morning before the students arrived was write the "Thought(s) for the Week" in bright colored chalk in the most visible area of the chalkboard. Then the desks were re-arranged in triads, quads, and circles to create a "closeness" between the students. The bulletin boards were completely re-done and replaced with posters and pictures that showed people doing cooperative activities such as playing, hugging, reading and so on. Posters displayed had quotes such as "In here, all colors matter and add to the rainbows in life."

Literature that was unavailable in the school's book room was ordered this week. The delivery dates, had to be satisfactory to the writer's calendared plans. Memos were sent out to the list of motivational guest speakers.

Preparation for the first guest's arrival was made by the writer cutting out and labeling paper hearts that were worn by the students and guest. The hearts had statements such as "I am an intelligent, and beautiful person and "I can because I Think I can."

The video "Stand and Deliver" was shown in parts. The scenes highlighting the students and teacher actually going through the time and agony of preparing for the test were shown. The conclusion was shown twice because the writer wanted to evoke strong feelings from the students as they experienced the characters' success on their AP exam.

During this week the first guest speaker visited the classes and spoke about how she had a self-defeatist attitude when she was in high school. Her message included ideas on how to release negative thoughts about yourself and replace them with healthy positive thoughts about the self and life in general. This guest was an excellent choice to "kick-off" the implementation and test preparation. The speaker is a math teacher at the writer's work site.

Weeks 2 and 3

These two weeks the actual direct teaching/coaching by the writer began. Test-wiseness and style analysis units were implemented. Students were provided a list of terms that will be employed on the AP English exams. These terms are relative to author's style analysis such as attitude/tone, diction, and quotation integration, detail, and point of view were introduced to the students during theses two weeks. Sample prompts and literature were closely read and discussed every day as prompted by students' responses to the literature.

The bulletins that were submitted each week for school-wide publishing were written this week, they each announcing the AP exam. An example was "If you want to know what's AP, come to Room A109 for a clue!"

Weeks 4 and 5

The letter to the parents apprising them of the AP exam was drafted and sent this week. The second guest speaker visited during the fourth week of implementation. The speaker was a former student who now attends one of the local colleges. He inspired the students with his story about how his classmates would tease and taunt him because of his small size (5'4"). He told the students about how he thought about committing suicide not too long ago. He was kept from putting his thoughts into action because of two pieces of literature that he felt changed his life -- The Holy Koran and Catcher in the Rye by J. D. Salinger. Since Catcher was one of the required readings in the writer's class, the students' interest level was raised. Many of them wanted to by pass the literature that was being studied at that time so that they could read Catcher immediately. Of course, this writer did not give in to their wishes.

Expansion of test-wiseness and style analysis techniques continued in the lesson plans. Emphasis was directed to point of view and organization of an author's ideas in literature.

Announcement and assignment of a poster, video, collage contest took place during week five. The students were instructed to create a visual representation of a scene or concept from their reading. Their visual had only one stipulation, it must be able to be understood by a junior high student or the student's Grandmother. It had to have a positive meaning or message for all to enjoy. Other activities this week centered around collecting the letters from parents that will be used later during implementation.

The writer saturated the office with sentence strips with glowing messages such as "Two Weeks from AP Test Day" and "Think AP".

Week 6

This week marked the half way point of the practicum implementation. The students at this point have been enthusiastic, yet, struggling slightly to understand how to

identify style analysis techniques. The collaborative learning groups worked very effectively. Students looked forward to their work time with their classmates. It appeared to the writer that their apprehensions about speaking in class when called on to do so by the teacher were allayed as a result of their collaborative efforts. All groups were pre-assigned initially according to the number they chose from one to five. All like numbers were subdivided so that no group had more than five students. After soliciting reactions and/or responses to the nightly reading, students formed their focus groups to continue with discussion generated by the total class review, or they were assigned other activities such as a discussion on an author's syntax sentence structure, symbolism, or a comparison of the author's vernacular with that of toady's adults or youth.

The week included readings from letters sent to parents. The parents were asked to write a brief phrase or sentence that could be used in class as a positive injection about her/his child in class. The writer shared these statements with the students near the end of the period as another motivational activity intended to uplift the students' self-confidence and esteem.

The writer found it necessary to print and post more sentence strip posters than anticipated. Many students outside of the AP program tore down the posters after the first day they were posted. This was a very unnecessary and time consuming venture that this writer does not feel, should be eliminated.

Weeks 7 and 8

The seventh week was arranged to include a less demanding set of activities. The writer needed more time to teach and listen to the students concerns about their compositions. Many students believed too much emphasis was placed on the writing process and not on the actual class interactions and discussions about the literature. Although the writer's expected outcomes could be achieved by submitting to the students' request, the quality and level of their learning would have suffered if a balance had not

been attempted in preparation for the test. The students were assured that the AP English exams test not only the student's ability to read and interpret literature. After spending two days on this challenge, the writer was able to continue with the scheduled lessons and activities.

The guest speaker originally scheduled for week eight canceled. Therefore the writer phoned a parent of one of the students to visit at the last minute. The parent agreed to visit and spoke the following day to the students about the challenge of preparing for her real estate broker's license. The fact that this parent's subject dealt with test-taking was undoubtedly a plus for this writer's AP test prep program. She emphasized the need to study for major exams weeks in advance.

She also gave them some study tips that worked for her as well as test-taking tips. She was encouraging to the student especially when they found out that she took AP exams when she was in high school. She explained that she felt her career opportunities were stifled because she decided not to continue with college after attending for three and one-half years. She told them that she would take another career path in retrospect. This speaker proved to be yet another positive contribution and motivation for the students. Indeed, a welcomed surprise.

Weeks 9 and 10

These two weeks were heavily concentrated with concluding lesson plans and test preparation activities. Plans for an in class "Academic Rally" were made. A student balloonist was contacted to decorate the room for the rally scheduled in two weeks. Computerized invitations and fliers were made and sent by the writer's student aide that will be sent out this week and next week to interested staff and interested parents. Responses to the invitations were received by the writer.

Weeks 11 and 12

Of the fifteen responses returned to the writer, seven parents actually showed up for the rally which was held during the eleventh week of implementation. The rally included awards to students for demonstrating academic excellence, super attendance, most improved, and most inspirational. At least four students were named in each category. The honorees were chosen by the writer. However, the same categories were used by the students for their selections. The writer wanted a large number of students to be honored during the rally, thus the reason for having student-selected and teacher-selected honorees. The only displeasure the writer had with the rally was there was not enough time for the students to fully enjoy this modified rally in a one hour time frame although the students exhibited their delight for the entire time. The party balloons and food brought on a pre-championship atmosphere. The students, parents, and other guests expressed their appreciation for being allowed to participate in the AP Exam Academic Rally.

On the actual day of the exam, the writer gave paper hearts to the principal, staff supporters, and students in the writer's class who were not scheduled to take the exam. Each heart was approximately 3 1/2 x 5" and had the words "I am an AP Supporter!"

The final week of implementation was used by the writer to assess the program outlined during implementation. The questionnaire administered by the writer (Appendix A) was again given to the writer's student. The results were compiled and discussed in general class session with the writer's students. Their answers generally support the idea that as a result of direct teaching/coaching of style analysis and test-taking techniques necessary for English AP exams, the students' confidence as test-takers and English students was greatly enhanced.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Although the number of students enrolled in the Honors or Advanced Placement (AP) program over the past three years has averaged approximately one hundred twenty students, only slightly more than a dozen of those in the program chose to take one of the English AP examinations during any one of those same three years. Of particular concern to this writer was the fact that none of these students were juniors. This became the problem to be resolved by implementation of this practicum. Further questions by this writer revealed that during this same time period, many of the juniors in the Honors program took one or more AP exams in other subjects such as Calculus, Spanish, and History. Based on these juniors' academic successes in previous English classes as well as other academic core areas, this writer felt confident that given direct teaching (coaching), test-taking strategies and motivational strategies, juniors in the honors program could gain the confidence needed to take a rigorous exam such as the AP English Language or Literature exams offered yearly by the College Board.

Results

The two expected outcomes have been met to the satisfaction of this writer.

Outcome one which states that ten out of sixty honors juniors will take an AP English examination was met exceedingly. According to the writer's site test coordinator, in his ten years at this particular site, never had the response by students been so great. In the past, at the most, eight students took an English AP exam and none have ever been classified as juniors. This year, however, he documented that sixty-nine students took an English AP examination. Of those sixty-nine, nineteen of them were classified as juniors. (See Tables 1 and 2)

Outcome two states that of the ten juniors who were expected to take an AP exam, three out of ten would score a "3" or better on the exam. On a Mock AP exam complied by a commercial testing source, four of the juniors scored "3" or more on their exam. This number (four) exceeds the expected outcome and pleases this writer immensely. On the official test graded by the Educational Testing Service (ETS), this writer claims greater success. One of the juniors proudly scored a "3" which according to the ETS is comparable to a college grade of "B". Surprisingly, nine juniors scored a "2" which is comparable to a college grade of "C". Although only one student scored a "3" instead of the expected outcome of three students scoring a "3", this writer claims a bigger success since ten juniors exceeded the number that the writer expected to pass the test. Undoubtedly the implemented plan carried out by the writer proved to be a part of a success story of which the students, parents, and staff at this writer's site should be proud.

Discussion

The implementation of the solution strategy and calendar plan outlined brought about several noteworthy results.

First, the number of students taking one of two English Advanced Placement exams this school year (1993-94) increased from five students last year (1992-93) to sixty-nine students this school year. Of the sixty-nine students, nineteen of them were eleventh grade honors junior students. This number exceeds the expected outcome of this writer. (It was a projected outcome that only ten juniors would take one of the English placement examinations.)

Second, as a result of the interest generated by the motivational strategies outlined in the writer's Calendar Plan, the majority of the writer's juniors appear to have developed a genuine interest in reading as evidenced by two indicators. The number of honors junior students who have checked classic literature (novels, short stories, etc.) out from the school library has increased based on data produced by the library/media specialist who

generates a bi-monthly list of "over-due" books. The librarian/media specialist's list of over-due books includes titles such as Lord of the Flies by William Golding, Song of Solomon by Toni Morrison, and various titles by Maya Angelou and John Steinbeck. Some inference can be made that the juniors who checked their books out have developed some affinity for reading classic literature because their reading was considered recreational and not part of their graded reading assignments. Another indicator was that the writer's students expressed their approval and desire to read and analyze more literature than previously studied in class.

Third, a mock AP English exam was administered to this writer's juniors. Using a rubric and sample exam prompts provided by the College Board, four of the nineteen juniors scored three or above on the mock AP exam. However, the ETS reported one student with a "3" and nine with a "2". Again, it may be inferred that these students have gained confidence and competence in their knowledge about the subject matter and thus in themselves.

Fourth, many of the senior honor AP students who took the test last year expressed interest and confidence as test-takers as noted by one of this writer's colleagues who teaches AP English to the seniors. The interest and confidence of the seniors is relative to the collaborative efforts of this writer and her colleague. The discussions and sharing of information between the writer and colleague along with the test preparation strategies had an obvious effect on this year's test takers who were in the honor junior or senior level classes. Again, the fact that the total number of students taking the AP English exam increased from five to sixty-nine this year can be viewed as a significant success indicator regarding the students' confidence level.

An interesting side note to these revelations can be linked to theories about teacher's expectations of students. This writer along with her colleague in the senior level program began vigorously promoting the AP exams at the onset of the school year unlike

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in past years. It did not come as a surprise that the students expressed minimal interest or enthusiasm about taking the test. Comments from the students ranged from "Are you crazy?"; "Don't even think about it."; and "I don't think so."; to "Ha!" when they were asked to consider the challenge of an AP examination. Within a three week time period, however, students were given several pieces of excerpted literature from previous AP English Literature and Language exams for exposure of content and style analysis. Weekly quiz results seemed to indicate that the students were gaining the ability to identify and articulate an author's literary style. In some instances, students reported that they were becoming so comfortable with reading, analyzing and writing about literature to the point where they found themselves humorously applying the analysis techniques to textbooks such as their U.S. History book and in one case a Biology textbook.

The implication of the students gaining confidence and competence in literary style analysis in preparation for the AP examination can largely be traced back to the teachers. The teachers expected these students to excel and they (students) did.

The correlation between the teacher's expectations and student's performance was congruous.

It must be clearly understood that preparing the juniors for a test that had been traditionally designated to be taken by seniors at this writer's site was by far a task with inherent problems. Three major problems presented themselves during implementation of this practicum.

The most pressing problem was the compression of time and teaching. The direct teaching that was necessary to prepare the students for the rigor of an AP examination was non-ending it seemed. The weekly Calendar Plan was used as a means of keeping this writer focused on extraneous activities that needed to be implemented in conjunction with the academic lessons that needed to be taught. This writer often felt overwhelmed by the

level of intense teaching that had to be given to the students practically every day. Finding a balance between the actual teaching and the sideline activities as noted on the Calendar Plan such as cutting out and printing up motivational badges and posters was very difficult. Finding the time for teaching and preparing lessons and activities was similar to a balancing act in a circus.

Time after school and planning periods should be designated for lesson plan strategies, conferences with students, or evaluation/assessment of student writings or the AP preparation program itself. The demands of the AP exam are tremendous. Thus, the test preparation, teaching, and evaluation must be as demanding on the teacher. Unmatched rigor on the part of the teacher will prove to be a disservice to the students. Therefore preparing for the non-teaching activities should be done in advance.

Another major problem that presented itself during implementation was the students' inability to pay the total test fee. As revealed in the description of this writer's work setting at the beginning of this practicum report, the average household income for families in the community is less than fifteen thousand dollars. Many students in this community work thirty to forty hours per week to assist with their family's living expenses. It is not uncommon for many of these students to have the responsibility of paying for utilities, food, or any number of necessities. Students quite often had to miss school in order for them to either go to work or to stay home to assist in family business. Many of these students function as the family's business liaison since a large percentage of the parents in this community are non or limited English speakers. In light of these facts, it was understandable that the overwhelming majority of the students targeted in this practicum could not pay the entire test fee. After becoming aware that the students did not have as much time to pay for the test as had been anticipated, this writer had to schedule meetings with the test coordinator who in turn met with the superintendent to rectify this economic development. Fortunately, the students were only expected to pay

half the cost of the test. The other portion came from private donations and businesses within the community. This writer would be remiss to not warn all interested teachers that if possible, solicitations or a pre-arranged district or school budget should be considered at least a year in advance before the AP examination. The added distraction and distress that this financial reality brought coupled with the intensity of teaching that was necessary to prepare the students for the test cannot be minimized. This writer suggests that a proposal be written to the superintendent by way of the principal to budget some if not all of the test cost. This should be done well in advance of the test fee deadline set by the College Board.

A final major problem that presented itself was the number of times the Calendar Plan had to be adjusted to yield for extra- curricular activities that interrupted the academic program on this writer's site. The principal and other persons working in an administrative capacity must be aware and supportive of this testing program and curriculum. Efforts must be made by AP teachers to impress upon administrator's that extra-curricular activities are necessary for the wholesome development of students. However, a balance between curricular and extra-curricular activities must be sought.

One of the most positive results of this practicum is the general enthusiasm expressed by the students and staff about the on-going motivational activities presented to students in the classroom. They expressed their desire to have the once-per-week motivational speakers to attend class two or three times per week instead of only once per week. Because of the abridged time period to prepare students for the test this writer considered their suggestion lightly. Although the weekly fifteen minute talks were heart-felt and welcomed by this writer, it must be clear that guided practice must have precedence over all other activities except student writing in preparation for the test.

Another result of this practicum was the interest and willingness of one of this writer's colleagues to give total support to the idea that many of the juniors and seniors

possessed skills and the ability to be confident and successful on the AP exam. This support system undoubtedly played a significant part in having one of this writer's outcomes become a reality. The implication of this is that sharing a vision with a respected friend or colleague may garner positive results. Including this colleague in from the conception of the idea to the actual administering of the test was more than what was expected by this writer from anyone. The writer was very pleased and relieved to know that someone was available at any given time to assist or intervene with the test preparation.

The results of this AP test preparation also generated a multitude of queries from other colleagues who may or may not have been directly involved in an AP course program. This writer was asked to present the motivational program/format in the future during a staff development meeting so that other teachers could learn and adapt the writer's strategies in any class.

Recommendations

Seven recommendations seem appropriate at this time. AP teachers must take on the role of a coach. The students must be coached into thinking they can be successful on the test. Skills must be taught and daily practice must be allowed in preparation for the test. Academic Pep rallies should be part of the preparation as motivation for the student and teacher.

Second, a Calendar Plan, outlining teaching and non-teaching activities should be developed and followed as closely as possible. Straying from the weekly plans may cause students to miss important knowledge and practice necessary for success on the test.

Third, the importance of soliciting money for the students' test fee six to eight months in advance of the test is critical. Parents not having extra resources because of their impoverished situation came very close to being the sole reason the students would not have been able to take the exam.

Fourth, AP teachers must stress the importance of the administrators and key staff members being supportive of the AP test program. Serious and careful dialogue should be opened in an effort to alleviate the false belief by some that AP programs, students, and teachers are elitist and thus an intrusion. It is the AP teacher's responsibility to point out the need for this type of program being as important as programs designated for physically challenged students or athletically gifted students. Equity must be pursued for all students at every level.

Fifth, the teacher should not be the center of attraction in the classroom. Guests should be invited on a weekly basis to come in and share their motivational message with the students. These guests should not be limited to age, gender, or profession. The only requirements should be a sincere desire to inspire students to feel good about themselves and have the ability to speak clearly.

Sixth, AP teachers need to work collaboratively with each other. This not only is advantageous to the teachers, but it also acts as reassurance to the students in AP classes that they are not working in isolation of other students.

Finally, efforts must be made by AP teachers to garner a staff support network in favor of the AP program. Supplying the staff with information about the program on a monthly or bi-monthly basis may prove to be the extended support needed by AP teachers and students. They may encourage more students to take the test.

Dissemination

The writer has used the strategies and lessons outlined in the Calendar Plan and Description of Plans for Analyzing Results from this practicum report for an English Department staff development meeting. This practicum was also shared at a district meeting of gifted and talented teachers. The teachers in both instances received the information favorably. Some of the areas such as style analysis of literature piqued the interest of many teachers. They agreed that many of the concepts on the AP exam can and

should be simplified and taught in elementary and middle school. Finally, this practicum report will be presented during the next school year at an in-service for all interested teachers. A special meeting will also take place involving counselors and administrators to engender support for the AP program as a means of encouraging them to enroll students in the program for the upcoming school year.

The writer has been encouraged by the positive response of the English Department and the students to continue with this strategic plan for AP English test preparation.

This practicum report will also be condensed and submitted for publication to English Journal and California English, both of which are written by teachers and supporters of English/language arts.

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APPENDIX A

HONORS/ADVANCED PLACEMENT ENGLISH QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SENIORS AND JUNIORS

HONORS/ADVANCED PLACEMENT ENGLISH QUESTIONNAIRE

THIS QUESTIONNAIRE WILL NOT BE USED FOR GRADING PURPOSES. IT WILL BE USED TO EVALUATE THE CURRENT SENIOR ADVANCED PLACEMENT (AP) ENGLISH STUDENTS' AWARENESS AND PARTICIPATION IN THE AP ENGLISH PROGRAM. IT WILL ALSO BE USED TO DETERMINE REASONS WHY AS JUNIORS, THE CURRENT SENIORS DID NOT TAKE THE EXAMINATION.

ADDITIONALLY, THE QUESTIONNAIRE WILL BE USED TO ASSESS THE CURRENT JUNIOR HONORS ENGLISH STUDENTS' NEEDS IN PREPARATION FOR THE AP ENGLISH EXAM. PLEASE RESPOND TO EACH QUESTION AS HONESTLY AS POSSIBLE BY CIRCLING THE NUMBER OF YOUR ANSWER CHOICE. USE THE FOLLOWING NUMBER EXPLANATIONS:

1=never agree (NO); 2=slightly agree; 3=agree;
4=usually agree; 5=strongly agree (YES)

1. What is your current grade level?

   circle one: **SENIOR** **JUNIOR**

2. I completed last year's junior Honors English course.

   1 2 3 4 5

3. Information about the AP English exam availability was/is not provided in my junior English course.

   1 2 3 4 5

4. Taking an AP English exam is a challenge I look forward to having this year.

   1 2 3 4 5

5. Receiving college credit and saving hundreds of dollars in tuition by taking and scoring a 3, 4, or 5 on the AP English exam is of high interest to me.

   1 2 3 4 5

FOR SENIORS ONLY #6-12

6. I intend to take an AP English exam this year as a senior.

1 2 3 4 5

7. I took an AP English exam last year as a junior.

1 2 3 4 5

8. The literature surveyed in the junior Honors English course was positively challenging to me.

1 2 3 4 5

9. The literature was easy to comprehend.

1 2 3 4 5

10. The literature that was surveyed had characters and situations in life that are similar to my own character and situations in life.

1 2 3 4 5

11. I had a clear idea and knowledge about style analysis of literature in the junior Honors English program.

1 2 3 4 5

12. I had a clear idea and knowledge about test-taking strategies for the AP exam as a junior.

1 2 3 4 5

FOR JUNIORS ONLY #13-18

13. I intend to take an AP English exam this year as a junior.

1 2 3 4 5

14. The literature surveyed this year is positively challenging.

1 2 3 4 5

15. The literature is easy to comprehend.

1 2 3 4 5

16. The literature surveyed had characters and situations in life that are similar to my own character and situations.

1 2 3 4 5

17. I am acquiring a clear idea and knowledge about style analysis of literature this year in Honors English.

1 2 3 4 5

18. I am acquiring knowledge about test-taking strategies for the AP English exam this year.

1 2 3 4 5

FOR SENIORS AND JUNIORS #19-21

19. I am not confident about taking tests like the AP English exam.

1 2 3 4 5

20. I am confident that I can be successful on tests like the AP.

1 2 3 4 5

21. I have taken a minimum of two or more Honors English/AP English courses while in high school.

1 2 3 4 5

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HONESTY!

APPENDIX B

STYLE ANALYSIS OF LITERATURE
PRE/POST TEST

STYLE ANALYSIS OF LITERATURE
PRE/POST TEST

This test will not be used for grading purposes. It will be used to determine your strengths and weaknesses in defining terminology used when identifying an author's literary style of writing. Write a working definition for each of the terms next to the term. Be as clear and precise in your conceptualization as possible.

1. **TONE**

2. **ATTITUDE**

3. **DICTION**

4. **LANGUAGE**

5. **FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE**

6. **FIGURE OF SPEECH**

7. **DETAILS**

8. **IMAGERY**

9. **POINT OF VIEW**

10. **ORGANIZATION**

11. **IRONY**

12. **STRUCTURE**

13. **SENTENCE STRUCTURE**

14. **SYNTAX**

15. **PHRASING**

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1

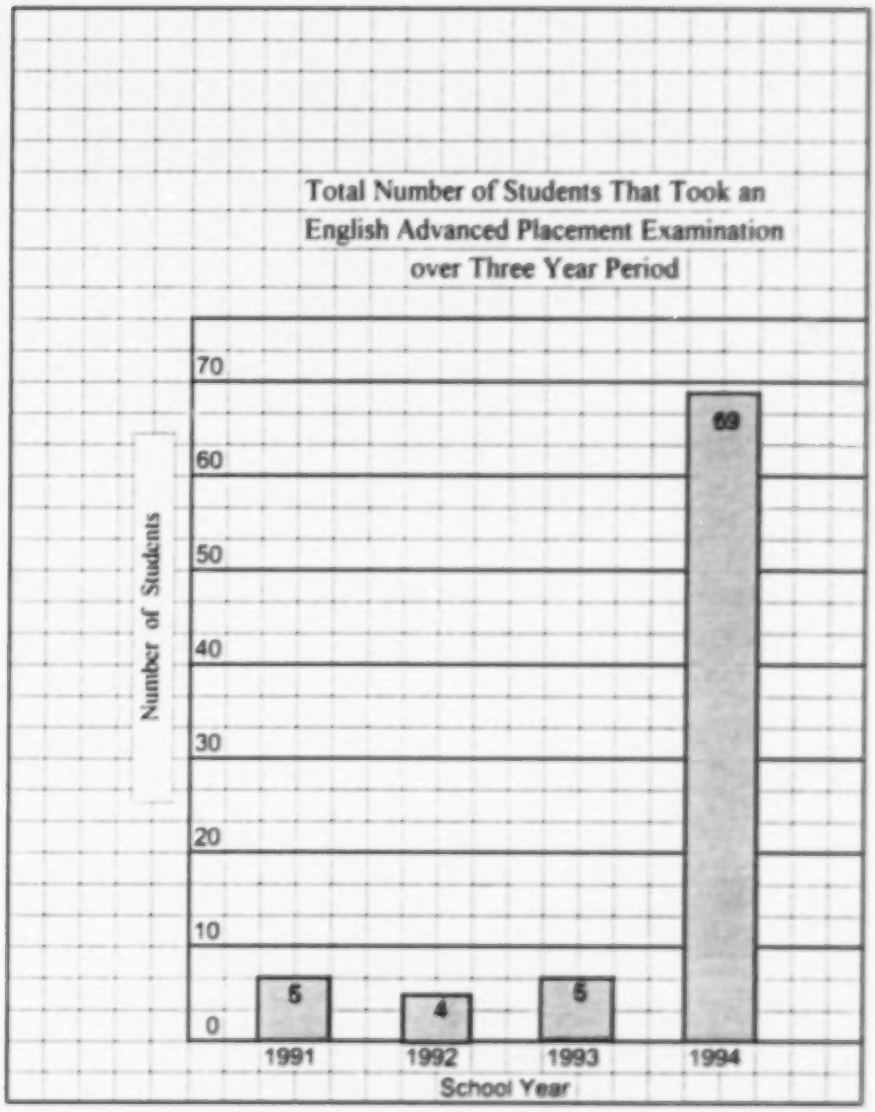
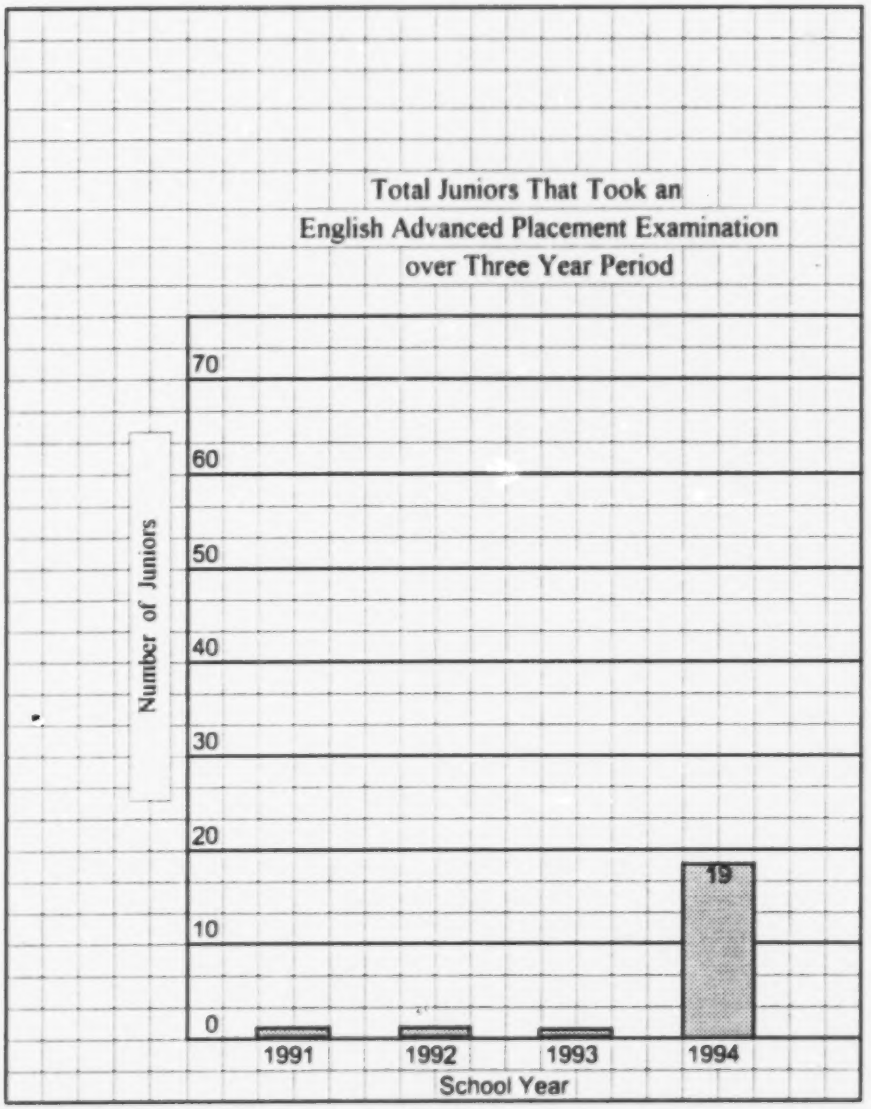

Total Number of Students That Took an
English Advanced Placement Examination
over Three Year Period
Number of Students
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
5
4
5
69
1991
1992
1993
1994
School Year

Table 2


Total Juniors That Took an
English Advanced Placement Examination
over Three Year Period
Number of Juniors
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
19
1991
1992
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